

## San Joaquin Valley Medical Society.

The meeting was called to order about 2 P. M. by the President, Dr. Lilley of Merced, and after his address proceeded with the regular order of business. There were present Drs. Loper, Manson, W. T. Maupin, Russell, Trowbridge, Sherman, Dunn and J. R. Walker and J. D. Davidson of Fresno, Bering of Tulare, Harry of Stockton, Surrhyne and Evans of Modesto, Hennemuth of Waterford, A. W. Morton of San Francisco, Lilley, O'Brien, Smith, Whitlock and Wolfson of Merced, and Byars of Madera.

Dr. Castle of Merced was elected to membership.

The first paper, "The Surgical Treatment of Tuberculosis of the Omentum and Mesentery," was not presented as the writer, Dr. Dameron, was not present, but Dr. Evans was called upon to discuss the subject anyhow. There was quite a lively discussion on the subject.

Next Dr. Harry of Stockton presented a paper on "Obstetric Methods in Dublin and Dresden," which was very interesting and brought forth a lively discussion of the subject.

Dr. Purdon of Galt sent his paper, he being unable to attend, the subject being "The Language of the Neurons." With it were a number of photos of pulse tracings which he had prepared.

Dr. McClelland of Los Banos sent a splendid paper the subject of which was: "Old Fashioned Remedies," in which he urged the profession to be better students of the *Materia Medica*, and to formulate their own prescriptions rather than to use so many ready made and proprietary mixtures, said to contain this or that and to cure a number of different diseases. It was greatly enjoyed by all, and freely discussed.

Dr. Russell's paper, "The Adrenal System," was of a scientific nature and well written and showed the author's study of the subject.

Resolutions, as follows, on the death of Dr. N. P. Duncan of Hanford, a former member, were adopted:

Since our last meeting our membership has been depleted by the loss of our esteemed co-worker, Dr. N. P. Duncan of Hanford.

*Resolved*, That by the death of our brother the San Joaquin Valley Medical Society has lost a valued, and zealous member, one ever ready to lend his best endeavors for the interest of this Society and the profession at large.

He was ever faithful to the duties entrusted to him, and was always ready to aid his professional brother to the extent of his ability. The community in which he lived and worked has also lost a faithful friend, who freely gave his time and service for their relief, and was ever ready and willing to answer a call and administer to their wants. Be it further

*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be spread on the minutes of this Society, published in the CALIFORNIA STATE MEDICAL JOURNAL, a copy sent to his family, and a copy published in one of the Hanford papers. Be it further

*Resolved*, That this Society extend its sympathy to the bereaved family.

R. E. BERING,  
D. H. TROWBRIDGE,  
W. T. MAUPIN,  
Committee on Resolutions.

The Society elected the following officers for the next term: President, Dr. R. E. Bering, Tulare; 1st Vice-President, Dr. P. Manson, Fresno; 2nd Vice-President, Dr. A. M. Smith, Merced; 3rd Vice-President, Dr. C. W. Kellogg, Bakersfield; Secretary, Dr. J. R. Walker, Fresno; Assistant Secretary, Dr. D. H. Trowbridge, Fresno; Treasurer, Dr. T. M. Hayden, Fresno.

The Society then adjourned to the Harvey House where they enjoyed a splendid banquet given by the Merced County Medical Society.

The next meeting will be held at Fresno on the 2nd Tuesday in October.

J. R. WALKER, Secretary.

## ALCOHOLICS.\*

By CHARLES ANDERSON, M. D., Santa Barbara.

THE discussion of the use of alcohol in medicine is so complicated by the contention of the warring elements, vested interests on one side and the religio-politico-ethical opinions on the other, that it is almost a dangerous proceeding to attack the question; for one side or the other is almost sure to raise the cry of interest, or the charge that the party has been influenced by unworthy motives. Unfortunately, the same state of affairs seems to have arisen within the medical profession as exists without, if the discussions in some of the journals are to be taken as an index. The organization of medical temperance societies shows that at least one side has taken a decided stand on a subject, that, scientifically is still *sub judice*.

What we want in the consideration of this subject are facts, scientifically determined facts, not arguments. The latter, most unfortunately, are what we have most of, on both sides of the question; while demonstrated facts such as scientific medicine of today demands, are sadly wanting. The sifting of the facts for or against the use of alcoholics as therapeutic agents, is not by any means an easy matter. The scientifically demonstrated items of fact so far separated from the mass of arguments and careless observations by untrained observers on the one hand, and on the other the scientifically obtained truths gained by trained observers, who in many instances have had no clinical experience by which to try out their observations, are not sufficient to base any definite conclusions upon.

It is now over thirty years since Bartholow<sup>1</sup> began his study of alcoholics as therapeutic agents in a scientific way. When he announced that alcohol actually reduced animal heat, I well remember how the "old practitioners" said, with ill-concealed contempt, that anyone could prove that it was not true by simply taking a good sized dram of whiskey any cold day. Bartholow took the temperature of a number of animals and birds, and then gave them alcohol and again took their temperature at short intervals and demonstrated that there was a slight rise of temperature at first, but later there was a steady and decided fall in temperature; he demonstrated the same thing in man. The study of blood pressure was unsatisfactory, by reason of lack of a reliable instrument, none being obtainable at that time. Anstie<sup>2</sup> had made a number of experiments, and, while at that time they were considered as satisfactory and complete, now they are out of date and too crude for our times, although they are still referred to by some writers.

Headland<sup>3</sup> is even more antiquated, though he, too, is still quoted, but there is nothing in either of these authorities that is of any value today to anyone looking for such facts as we want now.

Stille<sup>4</sup>, in summing up the subject of the action of alcohol, says: "Experiments and observations made to determine the mode of action of alcohol on the economy have too generally referred to excessive doses rather than to such as are employed in dietetics and medicine. Hence, a dispute has arisen, whether alcohol raises or depresses animal temperature, when it is of daily experience that moderate doses augment the heat and excessive doses diminish it." He gives no experimental tests or figures to substantiate his statements. He quotes Moleschott's saying that "Alcohol is the savings bank of tissues. He who eats little and drinks alcohol in moderation retains as much in his blood and tissues, as he who eats more and drinks no alcohol." The quotation shows that Stille was a believer in the use of alcohol in moderation.

Spitzka<sup>5</sup>, in discussing alcoholic insanity, does not by any means make it clear that the patient is insane because he is a drunkard, or a drunkard because

\*Read before the Santa Barbara County Medical Society, January, 1905.

he is of unsound mind, although he leaves you to infer the former as the fact.

Since the days of Bartholow's first studies, the controversy has waged high and low, both in Europe and this country. What have purported to be clinical observations and laboratory demonstrations, have been brought out by both sides, showing what the partisans wished to know, and immediately the other side charges what may or may not be known, viz., that the results as published show only part of what was demonstrated, and not all the facts. The controversy has been particularly torrid in England. The anti-alcoholics, being led by Richardson, the arguments have been many and strong, but the demonstrations seem to have been few. Of course, it is easy to understand that a temperance advocate, who wanted to prove beyond peradventure that alcohol is a poison, could easily use a spirit containing methilic alcohol, CH HO instead of amyllic alcohol CH, and thereby get results beside which the trusted "terrible example" would be the merest child's play.

To such an extent has this controversy been carried, that nothing short of an examination of the subject by a government commission or a detail of medical officers from one or all of the departments maintaining medical officers; such a commission or detail of medical officers to be hedged about by extraordinary precautions so as to prevent influence by either side, or even the appearance of a justification of a charge of bias either way.

This commission or detail should have authority to make a full and complete examination of all phases of the subject. Aside from the ordinary physiological examination of the matter which should be carried on in the ordinary way, I would suggest that a physiologico-clinical study of various diseases be made for the benefit of practical medicine, as well as the more scientific examination of the subjects. That is, it should be the object to study the effect of alcohol on the process and progress of disease, if it has any. A given number of animals, subject to a disease common to man, to be inoculated with that disease, half this number to be given daily, a stated amount of alcohol (per weight of animal), then after a given time, dependent on the incubatory period of the disease being studied, the animals to be killed in pairs, one of the animals that has been given alcohol and one of the control animals, at such intervals as may be required, and the comparative pathological results, both gross and microscopical, to be noted and recorded in each case throughout the series. This should be carried out *in extenso* with every scientifically demonstrated disease, the series to be carried out and repeated as may be necessary to give an undoubted result, whatever it may be.

To remove the commission as far as possible from the storm-center of controversy, it might be well to have it sit in Manila and use one of the abandoned military hospitals.

In making a suggestion for physiologico-chemical study of diseases subjected to alcoholic dosage, I have no idea that it would be met with the approval of either side in the controversy, but I believe it would be a great benefit to the medical profession and the world in general.

#### REFERENCES.

1. Lectures before class in Medical College of Ohio, 1872-74. R Bartholow.
2. Stimulants and Narcotics, Francis E. Anstie, Philadelphia, 1865.
3. Action of Medicine, Frederick William Headland, Philadelphia, 1855.
4. National Dispensatory, Alfred Stille, Philadelphia.
5. Manual of Insanity, E. C. Spitzka, New York, 1895.
6. Richard C. Cabot, Alcohol Studies, Boston, 1903.

A poor woman from the country once brought me three chickens nicely dressed, in payment for services, and it was learned later that she had stolen the chickens. Ergo: Patients are willing to steal in order to pay doctor's bills.—*Am. Medicine*.

## PUBLICATIONS.

### First Annual Report of the Henry Phipps Institute. Philadelphia.

The Henry Phipps Institute of Philadelphia founded in 1903 for the study, treatment and prevention of tuberculosis, has issued its First Annual Report, a volumn containing 265 pages. The work of the first year is described in detail and bears evidence of the energy of Dr. Flick and his assistants, for clinical work was begun the day after the Institute was founded. A four-story building was secured and while the upper stories were being fitted up for wards, the dispensary work was developing. During the first year 2039 patients were treated, 254 of them being hospital patients. The dispensary department is thus seen to be a very important one, and its work is similar to that done by like organizations in New York, Boston, and Scranton, Pa., where, in addition to the necessary medical treatment, the patients are taught and drilled in preventive measures. They are not only taught how to care for their sputum, but the necessary material with which to care for it is provided for them. At regular intervals they are visited in their homes by nurses and given practical instruction in hygienic living. Too much cannot be said in commendation of this dispensary plan, and it is not to the credit of medical men and humanitarians elsewhere, that it is not found in every large city. What an opportunity exists in San Francisco, where the death rate from tuberculosis reaches 32 per 10,000 of population, for the legitimate use of some of our misdirected, but well meaning philanthropy!

The medical staff consists of 16 men; and there are 10 nurses, the latter composed of girls who were cured of tuberculosis at the White Haven Sanatorium, and thus the Institute is preparing women to nurse tuberculous subjects while providing an occupation for cured consumptives.

A laboratory, pathological museum, and autopsy room have been equipped, and the Autopsy Report forms a very important part of the work now being reviewed.

No special line of treatment is instituted, reliance being placed on food, nursing and hygienic living.

Of the results, time has not sufficiently elapsed to speak with any degree of accuracy, and besides in a dispensary practice it is impossible to compile correct results. Of the hospital patients, however, more than 28% are reported improved, 43% unimproved, 24% terminated in death, and in 4% the results are not recorded. These figures must not be compared with those of tuberculosis sanatoria, however, for it must be remembered patients in all stages of the disease are admitted here, and the majority of them came from the poorest district of Philadelphia and constituted a class whose resistance would naturally be a poor asset in the struggle.

An international lecture course, instituted for the education of the public, and given by men of prominence, constitutes an important feature of the work of the Institute. Drs. E. L. Trudeau, Wm. Osler, G. Sims Woodhead, Herman M. Biggs, and Edoardo Maragillano have already contributed to this course, and their lectures, previously published elsewhere, form part of this Report.

If space permitted much could be said regarding the very complete neurological report by Dr. McCarthy, in charge of that department, the section on tuberculous neuritis, 6 cases of which were thoroughly studied, being of particular interest. The author is in doubt whether the neuritis is due to tuberculous toxins, or to those from mixed infections. The ulnar reflex which he found present in practically all cases of advanced disease, and many cases of early tuberculosis, may prove of value in the recognition of incipient cases; at any rate, it will have its place in the symptom-complex. A report on a case of fibroid phthisis, and a statistical study of tuberculosis in Philadelphia complete this very interesting Report.